

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي قَدَّمَ الْإِنذَارَ عَلَى النَّهْزِيبِ وَعَلَّمَ أَطِبَّاءَ
 الْعِلْمِ الْيُفَنِيَةِ الرِّيَاضَةِ وَالنَّهْزِيبِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى الشُّرَفِ
 سَائِسِ وَأَعْلَمَ طَيْبِ مُحَمَّدٍ الْمُبْعُوثِ إِلَى الْبَعِيدِ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ
 وَتَلَّى أَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعَهُ مَلْجِيبِ حَيْثُ قَلْبٌ يُوَحِّبُ
 أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَيُّ زَيْنِ الْقِصَاصِ قَدْ تَزَكَّوْا مَا يَصِحُّ ذِكْرُهُ

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AWAKING FROM THE SLEEP OF HEEDLESSNESS

Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

al-Ḥāfiẓ

Abū'l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī [d. 597AH]

AWAKING from the SLEEP of HEEDLESSNESS

being a translation of his
'Tanbih al-Nā'im al-Gamr 'ala Mawāsim al-'Umar'



Every breath we take is taking us closer to death. The time we spend in this world is short, the time we are held in our graves is long, and the punishment for following our lowly desires is calamitous.

Awaking from the Sleep of Heedlessness

al-Hāfiẓ Abū'l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī

Translated from the original Arabic by
Aymān ibn Khālīd



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CONTENT

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

al-Imām and al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū'l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī.....	11
His Name and Lineage.....	11
His Birth and Upbringing.....	11
His Teachers.....	12
His Students.....	12
His Children.....	13
His Uniqueness as a preacher.....	14
His Works and effects.....	15
His Death.....	17

INTRODUCTION.....	19
-------------------	----

THE STAGES OF LIFE.....	20
-------------------------	----

THE FIRST STAGE

Encouraging the Disciplining of Children.....	21
Section One: Investing in the Intellect of a Child.....	23
Section Two.: Encouraging Marrying the Son off.....	25

THE SECOND STAGE

Protecting the Self and Struggling against Desires.....26

Section One: Encouraging Learning in this Season.....27

THE THIRD STAGE

The Stage of Maturity.....33

The Characteristics of this Stage.....33

THE FOURTH STAGE

The Stage of Old age

[The Good End].....36

Reports and Statements of the Righteous.....37

THE FIFTH STAGE

The Stage of Decrepitude.....41

Reports and Statements of the Righteous.....42

Closure.....46

APPENDIX ONE

Averting Indolence.....48

Section One: The Cure for Laziness.....49

APPENDIX TWO

Self Discipline.....51

Section One: How to Discipline Oneself.....52

APPENDIX THREE

Disciplining Children.....55

Section One: Taking Care of the Trust.....56

Section Two: Future of your Child.....57

APPENDIX FOUR

Awakening After Heedlessness.....58

APPENDIX FIVE

The Lives of Our Pious Predecessors.....61

APPENDIX SIX

Knowledge and Action are Intertwined.....63-64

Transliteration Table

Consonants. Arabic

initial: unexpressed medial and final:

ء '	د d	ض ḍ	ك k
ب b	ذ dh	ط ṭ	ل l
ت t	ر r	ظ ṣ	م m
ث th	ز z	ع ʿ	ن n
ج j	س s	غ gh	ه h
ح ḥ	ش sh	ف f	و w
خ kh	ص ṣ	ق q	ي y

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.

Short: ا a إ i أُ u

long: آ ā ū ī

diphthongs: اَو aw

اَي ay

THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

al-Hāfiz Abū'l-Faraj 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Jawzī

His Name and Lineage

He is Abū'l-Faraj Jāmal al-Dīn 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn 'Ubayd Allāh Ibn al-Jawzī al-Qurashī al-Tamimi al-Bakrī from the family of Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr *al-Ṣiddīq*, al-Baghdādī al-Hanbalī.¹

His Birth and Upbringing

He was born in 509 or 510 A.H. Upon reaching adolescence, his aunt took him to Ibn Nāṣir from whom he learned a great deal. He came to love preaching while barely having reached the age of puberty, and from then started to give sermons to the people.

His father passed away when he was three years old so his aunt

¹ *Thail al-Raḥḍatāin*, p.21, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, p. 13/26.

took care of him. His relatives were copper merchants so at times in hadith hearings he would write his name as 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn 'Alī al-Ṣaffār [i.e. The Coppersmith].

His first ḥadīth hearing was in 156 A.H., as cited by al-Dhahabī.²

While still very young he became known as a religious person who would not socialise with anyone and would not eat from any food whose source was doubtful. He would only leave his house for prayer and he would not play with other kids. He was a person of very great determination and ambition and he spent all his life busy in seeking knowledge, preaching and authoring.³

His Teachers

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Jawzī has already introduced his teachers in his book *Mashyakhat Ibn al-Jawzī* [i.e. the scholars who taught Ibn al-Jawzī] where he listed many of them. In the field of ḥadīth he benefitted from accompanying Ibn Nāṣir, in Qur'ān and *Adab* [i.e. Manners] from Sibṭ al-Khiyāt and Ibn al-Jawālīqī. He was the last to narrate from al-Dinawari and al-Mutawakkili.⁴

His Students

Those who narrated from him include his son and companion, the great scholar Muḥyī al-Dīn Yūsuf who was a teacher in the

² *Thail al-Raudatain*, 21, *Thail 'ala Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/401, *Shatharāt al-Thahab*, 4/330.

³ *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 13/29, *Said al-Khāṭir*, 238.

⁴ *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 21/366, 367.

institute of al-Musta'sim billāh, his oldest son 'Alī al-Nāsikh, his grandson, the preacher Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Farghalī al-Hanafī the author of *Mir'āt al-Zamān* (Mirror of Time), al-Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-Ghanī, Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ibn Qudāma, Ibn al-Dubaythī, Ibn al-Nājjār and al-Diyā.⁵

His Children

His grandson Abū al-Muẓfir and majority of those who wrote his biography say that he had three sons:

1. The oldest of them, Abū Bakr 'Abd al-'Azīz: He became a jurist in the school of Aḥmad and took knowledge from Abū al-Waqt, Ibn Nāṣir, al-Armawī and a group of his father's teachers. He traveled to the city of al-Musul where he preached and held sermons there for which he earned the people full acceptance. It is said that the family of al-Zahrazurī used to be jealous of him so they made someone put poison in his drink which caused him to die in al-Mūsul in 554 A.H. during the lifetime of his father.⁶
2. Abū al-Qāsim Badr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Nāsikh*
3. Abū Muḥammad Yūsuf Muḥyī al-Dīn⁷: He was the most

⁵ *Sīyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 21, 367.

⁶ *Thail Tabaqāt al-Hanabila*, 1/430, 431.

* Publishers note: For a detail biography of him please refer to, *The Sincere Council to the Seekers of Sacred Knowledge*, by Ibn Jawzī, published by Dār as-Sunnah, Birmingham, UK, 2011.

⁷ cf. *Sīyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 23/372, *al-'Ibar*, 5/237, *Dīwal al-Islām*, 2/122, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nibāyah*, 13/203, *Thail Tabaqāt al-Hanabila*, 2/258-261, *al-'Usjūd al-Mashūk*, 635, *Shatharāt al-Thabab*, 5/286287, Ibn Shaṭṭī: *Mukhtasar Tabaqāt al-Hanabila*, p.57.

intelligent and youngest son as he was born in 580 A.H. He became involved in preaching and held sermons after his father, in which he excelled and by which he was looked up to by his confreres. He then was appointed to control and supervise markets of Baghdād, and after that he was assigned to deliver the messages of the caliphs to kings of other different regions peculiarly to the Ayyūbī family in the Shām region. He held the position of teacher in the institute of caliph al-Mustāʿsim in 640 A.H. till he was killed in prison in 656 A.H. by Hulaku who occupied Baghdād and destroyed it. His three sons Jāmal al-Dīn, Sharaf al-Dīn and Tāj al-Dīn were killed with him. He has authored many works, including *Māʿadīn al-Abriḡ fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-ʿAḡḡ* and *al-Madhab al-Aḡmad fī Madhab Aḡmad*. Unlike his brother Abu al-Qāsim, he was a dutiful son who honored his father and treated him well.

His grandson mentioned that Ibn al-Jawzī had many daughters; Rabiʿa, Sharaf al-Nisāʾ, Zainab, Jauhara, Sitt al-ʿUlama al-Sughra and Sitt al-ʿUlama al-Kubrā.⁸

His Uniqueness as a Preacher

Excellent indeed are the words of al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī about him: 'He was the leading figure in reminding the people and had no equal. He would recite pleasant poetry and eloquent prose spontaneously and his fine words and moving speech was abundant. There has never been anyone like him, not before him and not after him. He is the carrier of the flag of exhortation in its various forms. He had a pleasant appearance and a good voice and his talks had an impact on peoples' hearts. His lifestyle in general was

⁸ *Mirʿat al-Zamān*, 8/503, Abū Shamma: *Thail al-Rauḡataīn*, 26.

beautiful.⁹ He also said: 'I believe there will not be another one like him.'¹⁰

Al-Hāfiẓ Ibn Rajab said: 'So we conclude that his gatherings of exhortation were one of a kind and nobody had heard of anything like them. They were gatherings of great benefit where the heedless would be reminded, the ignorant would come to know, the sinners would repent and the polytheists would become Muslims.'¹¹

His Works and Effects

Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said in *al-Ajwiba al-Miṣriyyah*: 'Shaikh Abū'l-Faraj excelled in many sciences and has many writings to his account. He would write on many topics, and as I counted his works I found them to be over one thousand in number. Afterwards, I found out about other works as well.'¹²

Having mentioned some of his books, al-Dhahabī said: 'I don't know of a scholar who has written what this man has.'¹³

The virtuous teacher 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-'Alūjī has written a book on his works which was printed in Baghdād in 1965. In this piece he researched their titles, their copies and copies that had been

⁹ *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 21/367.

¹⁰ *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 21/384.

¹¹ *Thail Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/410.

¹² *Thail Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/415, *al-Tāj al-Mukallal*, 70.

¹³ *Tathkeirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*, 1344.

printed and put them in alphabetic order. Whoever wishes to know about these books should refer to this work, keeping in mind that many of the manuscripts mentioned therein by al-'Alūjī have now been printed.

He authored approximately 300 books, some of his printed works include:

- *Talqīb Fubūm Abli al-'Athār fi Mukhtasari al-Siyari wal Akhbār.*¹⁴ [Only a portion has been printed]
- *Al-'Athkiyā' wa Akhbarahum.*¹⁵ [Printed]
- *Manāqib 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz.*¹⁶ [Printed]
- *Rawbu al-'Arwāh.*¹⁷ [Printed]
- *Shudhūr al-'Uqūd fi Tārikh al-'Uhūd.*¹⁸ [Manuscript]
- *Zād al-Masir fi 'Ilm al-Tafsir.*¹⁹ [Printed]
- *Al-Muntadham fi Tārikh al-Mulūk wal Umam.*²⁰ [Only 6 volumes have been printed]
- *Al-Dhabab al-Masbūk fi Siyaril Mulūk.*²¹ [Manuscript]
- *Al-Hamqa wal Mughaffalīn.*²² [Printed]

¹⁴ The book mentions the historical reports concerning the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions.

¹⁵ A literature book in which he includes stories of intellectual people..

¹⁶ The book details the virtues of the Caliph, 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz.

¹⁷ The book explains the concept of spirit and spirituality

¹⁸ An abridged version of the known history book *Tārikh al-Mulūk wal Umam*.

¹⁹ The book explains the science of *Tafsir*.

²⁰ The book mentions the history of nations and kings.

²¹ The book focuses on leaders and kings throughout history.

²² A literature book in which he reports the stories of idiots and fools.

- *Al-Wafa fi Fada'ili al-Mustafa*.²³ [Printed]
- *Manaqib 'Umar ibn al-Khattab*.²⁴ [Printed]
- *Manaqib Aḥmad ibn Hanbal*.²⁵ [Printed]
- *Gharib al-ḥadīth*.²⁶ [Printed]
- *Al-Tabqīq*.²⁷ [Only the first volume has been printed]

And also a considerable number of works in other fields of knowledge.

His Death

Ibn al-Jawzī passed away on Friday the 12th of Ramaḍān in 597 A.H and was buried next to the grave of Imam Aḥmad ibn Hanbal in the cemetery of Bāb Ḥarb.²⁸

²³ The book relates the virtues of the Prophet (ﷺ).

²⁴ The book relates the virtues of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab.

²⁵ The book relates the virtues of Imam Aḥmad ibn Hanbal.

²⁶ The book explains one major aspect of the science of ḥadīth i.e. the gharīb ḥadīth.

²⁷ The book examines the authenticity of narrations used in the known book '*al-Ta'liq al-kabir*' of al-Qadi Abū Ya'la, and how classification of ḥadīth effected scholars views.

²⁸ For a more detailed biography of al-Hāfiẓ Ibn al-Jawzī, refer to: Ibn Athir's *al-Kamil*, 12/71, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī: *Mir'āt al-Zamān*, 8/481, al-Mundhirī: *al-Takmilā*, Biography 608, al-Bāghghal: *al-Mashyakba*, 140, Abū Shāmma: *Thail al-Raḥḍatāin*, 21, Ibn al-Sā'i: *al-Jāmi'*, 9/65, Ibn Khalkān: *al-Wafayāt*, 3/140, al-Dhahabī: *al-Ibar*, 4/297, *Dūwal al-Islām*, 2/79, *Tatbkiyat al-Huffāz*, 4/1342, *Siyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā*, 21/365, Ibn Kathīr: *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nibāyah*, 13/26, Ibn Rajab: *Thail Tabaqāt al-Hanabila*, 1/399, al-Jazari: *Ghāyat wa'l-Nibāyah*, 1/375, Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khan: *al-Taj al-Mukallal*, 70, Ibn Shaṭṭī: *Mukhtasar Tabaqāt al-Hanabila*, p. 42.

Introduction

ALL PRAISE BE TO THE ONE WHO made the different stages of life. During these stages, there are those who submit to Allāh's orders and thereby advance. Others who are a wasteful of this time and thereby struck with loss and regret. Indeed, life has been designated so that people [use] to reach the sought [i.e. Paradise] and to remove all that which causes loss and defect. Whoever lives his life appropriately [as per Allāh's commands], his life will be a trade generating for him, abundantly multiplied profits¹, whereas the corrupt one who does not act accordingly, will find his soul ruined. A good deed is written as ten full deeds to seven hundred and more², and a sin makes the

¹ The proof of this is the *ayah*, "Verily, those who recite the Book of Allāh (this *Qur'ān*), and perform as-Ṣalāt (the prayers), and spend (in charity) out of what we have provided for them, secretly and openly, they hope for a (sure) trade-gain that will never perish." [Fāṭir, 35: 29]

² He is refering to the ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ), "Whoever intends to do a good deed and then he does not do it, a full good deed will be written for him. If he does it, ten full deeds are written for him to seven hundred and seven times as much full deeds. If he does not do it, a full good deed is written for him." Narrated by Aḥmad (2/234), Ibn Ḥibbān (31) *Mawarid*, Abū 'Uwanah (1/84), and Abū Nu'aym in *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'* (10/394) and the text is narrated by Aḥmad.

Introduction

upright return to the state of disturbance he was at before.

The eternal life in Paradise and the never-ending immortality which is like the immortality of the All-Merciful³, can be obtained by investing this short life appropriately, as whoever wastes his life is indeed a loser. Therefore a sensible person should know the value of his life and should reflect on his state, so that he captures what cannot be restored, if it is missed and because of which he might be ruined for wasting.

³The immortality of the creature cannot be like the immortality of the creator, because Allāh, May He be exalted and glorified, said, "*There is nothing like Him and he is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.*" [*al-Shūra*, 42: 11]

The Stages of Life

YOU SHOULD KNOW, May Allāh grant you success, that the stages of life are five:

The first stage: Starts from birth until puberty and that is fifteen years.

The second stage: Starts from puberty until the end of youth, which is until one reaches thirty five years of age. This is deemed as the stage of youthfulness.

The third stage: Starts from thirty five years of age until fifty years of age, and that is the stage of maturity.

The fourth stage: Starts from fifty years of age until seventy years of age, and that is the stage of old age.

The fifth stage: Starts from seventy years of age until death, and that is the stage of decrepitude.

The start and end of these stages may fluctuate from person to person. Nonetheless their stages are five.

THE FIRST STAGE

Encouraging the Disciplining of Children

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THIS STAGE is mainly concerning the parents, for [they spend it] disciplining, teaching, and leading their child to what benefits him. That said, parents should never slacken in disciplining and teaching their child, because "The effect of learning in early age is like engraving on a stone."¹

'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, May Allāh be pleased with him, said - regarding this *ayah*:

قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا

"protect yourselves and your families from a fire"
[*Tahrim* (66):6] - ,

"Teach them and discipline them."² Thus the parents should

¹ This saying is attributed to al-Ḥasan and it is used to show the importance of learning in childhood. (See: *Bahjat al-Majālis*, 1/109).

² Reported by al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak* (2/464) and al-Ṭabarī in his *Tafsīr* (28/165-166). Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajr said in *al-Fath* (8/659), "Its narrators are authorities."

teach the child about religious purity and how to pray, and they should lightly discipline the child³ for not praying after they reaches nine years of age.⁴ In addition they should encourage children to memorise the Qur'ān and make them listen to the ḥadīths [of the Prophet (ﷺ)], and they should teach them - whatever they can handle from knowledge. Moreover they should show them the ugliness of all that is ugly, and encourage them to acquire good morals and they should not slacken in teaching them as much as they can bears, for this is the stage of plantation.

A poet said,

“Do not neglect disciplining a child,
Despite of his complains about the pain of exhaustion.
And disregard the old,
For he is too old to be disciplined.”

Another said,

“If you straighten the branches of a plant, they will straighten up,
But the wood of a tree does not soften if you amend it.
Discipline might benefit a little boy in his cradle,
But it does not benefit an old man.”

³ In the margin: “They should discipline him for leaving it -the prayer- if he reaches nine years. It is known that the approved opinion of the Shāfiʿī teaching is, that a boy is ordered to pray when he reaches seven years, and is disciplined for leaving it after he reaches ten years. Therefore one should reflect.”

⁴ Authentic ḥadīth: reported by Aḥmad (2/187), al-Tirmidhī (407), al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (7/114), al-Hākim in *al-Mustadrak* (1/258), and al-Albānī reported it in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmiʿ* (4025).

‘Abdu’l-Mālik Ibn Marwān⁵ used to love his son al-Walīd too much but he overlooked disciplining him. Because of that, al-Walīd ended up making mistakes in grammar and syntax. So ‘Abdu’l-Malik said, “Our love for al-Walīd harmed him!”

Section: Investing in the Intellect of a Child

It is possible that a child might be privileged with intelligence enabling him to know what is good for him. Allāh said,

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ

“And We had certainly given Ibrāhīm his sound judgement before.”

[*al-Anbiya* (21): 51]

It is mentioned in the *Tafsīr* books that Prophet Ibrāhīm was three years old when he addressed the planet, the sun and the moon until he reached his final conclusion, as mentioned in the Qur’ān,

وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

I have turned my face towards Him Who has created the heavens and the earth.” [*al-An‘ām* (6): 79]

By the time a child reaches five years of age, his intelligence,

⁵ ‘Abdu’l-Mālik Ibn Marwān Ibn ul-Hakam al-Amawī al-Qurashī, his *kunya* is Abū’l-Walīd. He is one the greatest and most artful caliphs. He grew up in Madīnah as a jurisprudent, with vast knowledge and a worshipper. Khilafah (succession) was transferred to him after the death of his father in 65 H. He was born in 26 H. and died in 86 H. (*al-A‘lām*, 4/165)

activeness in good deeds, good choices and his keeping away from lowliness, or the opposite, will manifest itself.'

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, May Allāh be pleased with him, passed by some boys who were playing. When they saw him, they all ran away in different directions except for Ibn al-Zubayr⁶, may Allāh be pleased with him, who stood still. So 'Umar asked him, "Why didn't you step aside?" Ibn al-Zubayr said, "The road is not narrow, so I don't need to make way for you. And I didn't make a mistake, so I have no reason to fear you."⁷

A caliph asked the son of his minister, while he was in their house, "Which house is better? My house or your house?" The boy said, "My house!" The caliph asked, "Why?" The boy answered, "Because you are in it."⁸

The intelligence of a child, the level of his ambitions and endeavors are ascertained by observing his choices. When children gather in order to play, the one with a high ambitions and earnest endeavors would say, "Who is going to be in my team?"

⁶ 'Abdullāh Ibn al-Zubayr Ibn ul-'Awām: A descendant of 'Abdu'l-'Uzza Ibn-Qusī. He participated in the battle of Yarmouk with his father. He was given the pledge of Khilafah after the death of Yazid in Makkah. And he was the first child to be born after Islam. He was born twenty months after hijrah and he is the eldest of the children of Zubayr. He was killed in Makkah in 73 H. when he was 72 years old. (*Tabthib Tārikh Dimashq* by Ibn 'Asakir, 7/399)

⁷ This *athar* (tradition) was mentioned in *Tabthib Tārikh Dimashq* by Ibn 'Asākir (7/402).

⁸ The caliph intended here is al-Mu'tassim al-'Abbāsi and the minister is Khāqān, and his son is al-Fath Ibn-Khāqān. See: *Bahjat al-Majālis*, (1/106).

while the one with low ambitions and slump endeavors would say, "Who am I going to be with?" and it is noteworthy to know that when a child truly has high ambitions and earnest endeavors he would prefer knowledge over idle play.

Section: Encouraging Marrying the Son off

When the son becomes a teenager, his father should marry him off because it was mentioned in the ḥadīth, "Whoever's son reaches puberty, he can marry him off, but doesn't, and then the son commits a sin, then they will both share the burden of the sin"⁹

Therefore, it is surprising when a father forgets, how it was like to be a teenager. He forgets the suffering and danger of falling into sin at such age. That said, the father should know and be aware of the fact that his son will be subjected to what he previously went through. Ibrāhīm al-Harbī said, "The basis of corruption in boys is the influence of other boys on each other."

However sometimes, in very rare cases, a child may opt for knowledge over marriage and keep teaching himself patience; for instance, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, may Allāh have mercy on him, did not get married until after he was forty.¹⁰

⁹ Reported by al-Daylamī in *Musnad al-Firdaws* (4/132 - *Tasdiq al-Qawṣ*) ḥadīth number 5916 and Ibn ul-Jawzī mentioned it along with its chain of narration in his book '*Dispraise of hawa*' p.222-223.

¹⁰ Ibn ul-Jawzī mentioned this *athar* in his book '*Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn-Ḥanbal*' p.373.

THE SECOND STAGE

Protecting the Self and Struggling against Desires

THE SECOND STAGE starts from puberty until the end of youth, and it is the most prominent stage of struggling against the self, *hawā* (the desires) and Satan. By spending this period keeping oneself out of harm, one gets immensely closer to Allāh, Exalted is He. However being neglectful during it, is a cause of great loss. Whoever can endure the temptation of sins patiently without falling into them deserves to be praised, just as Yūsuf (*‘alayhi as-salāt wa salām*)¹ was praised for his patience, for if he had sinned, he would not have been what he had become.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Your Lord is amazed at an energetic

¹ He is referring to the *ayah* in which Allāh praised Yūsuf: “*Verily, he who fears Allāh with obedience to Him (by abstaining from sins and evil deeds, and by performing righteous good deeds), and is patient, then surely, Allāh does not make the reward of good doers to be lost.*” [Yūsuf 12: 90]

young man whose desires of women are restrained.”²

Allāh, Exalted is He, said in a ḥadīth Qudsī, “O young men! Whoever leaves his desire for My Sake, your status to me is like the status of one of my angels.”³

Section: Encouraging Learning in this Stage

A Young man should know that from the day he reached puberty it has become obligatory upon him to know Allāh, may He be exalted, by evidence and not by imitation. And it is enough of evidence that he reflects on himself and the way his organs are organised. As a result he should realise that this organisation must have an organiser, exactly as a construction must have a constructor.

One should also know that he has two angels who accompany him his whole life, and write his deeds and they display them before Allāh, May He be exalted and glorified, Allāh said,

وَأِنْ عَلَيْكُمْ
لِخَفِظَيْنِ ۖ كِرَامًا كُنِينِ ۖ يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

“And indeed, [appointed] over you are keepers, Noble and recording; They know whatever you do.”

² Reported by Aḥmad (4/151), al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (17/309) from ‘Uqbah Ibn-‘Amir. Also reported by al-Albānī in *Da‘if al-Jamī‘* (1658).

³ Ibn-Kathīr reported this ḥadīth in *al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah* (9/25) from ‘Umar Ibnul-Khaṭṭāb and he said, “This is a *gharīb* (scarce) ḥadīth.”

Also al-Ghazālī reported it in *al-Ihyā‘* (1/232) and al-‘Irāqī said in *‘al-Mughnī ‘an Haml al-Asfār*, “Narrated by Ibn ‘Adī from the ḥadīth of Ibn-Mas‘ūd with a weak chain of narration.”

[*al-Infītār* 82: 10-12]

Muḥammad Ibn ul-Faḍl⁴ said, “For the last forty years, I have not dictated to my recorder to record even one bad deed. If I did, I would be ashamed of both of them (i.e. the two angels).”⁵

Therefore a slave [of Allāh] should look at what ascends from his deeds. If he commits a sin, he should wipe it out with repentance and making up for it. And he should lower his gaze because Allāh, Exalted is He, said,

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوْا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze.”

[*Nūr* 24: 30]

Allāh, Exalted is He, said in a ḥadīth Qudsī, “Looking at the beauty of a woman is an arrow of the arrows of Satan. Whoever leaves it for the Sake and Pleasure of Allāh; I will immerse his heart with *īmān*, so that he will find its sweetness in his heart.”⁶

And hence, whoever lowers his gaze shall be safe.

⁴ Muḥammad Ibn al-Faḍl Ibn ‘Abbās. His kunyah is Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Balakhī. He is one of the most respectable Shaykhs of Khurasan. He was banished from Balkh, so he went to Samarqand and died in it in the year 319 H. (*al-A‘lām* 6/330)

⁵ Ibn ul-Jawzī reported this *athar* in his book *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwāh* (4/165).

⁶ Reported by al-Hākim (4/313-314), he said, “The chain of narration is authentic.” Bukhārī and Muslim did not report it. Al-Dhahabī commented on it, “I said: Ishāq and they judged ‘Abdu’l-Raḥmān al-Wāsitī as weak.”

Narrated al-Qudā‘ī in *Musnad al-Shihāb* in (1/196) ḥadīth number 293 through the chain of Ibn ‘Umar. Al-Albānī said in the *Da‘īfah*, “A very weak ḥadīth.”

The Second Stage: Protecting the Self and Struggling against Desires

A person should be content with having one woman and should not take the advantage of permissibility of enjoying more than one woman, for it disperses the heart and weakens the strength, and the desires for women have no end.⁷

One of the righteous predecessors used to say to himself, "I possess nothing except this morsel [of bread] and this woman [i.e. wife], so be patient or die."

Many people shed tears of regret when reaching age of maturity because of the sins they have committed and good deeds they have neglected during their stage of youth. Therefore, in this stage of youth, the one who eventually will become weak should lengthen the night prayers (also known as *Qiyamul-Layl*) while he still can, and the one who eventually will not be able to fast should fast a lot.

People are of three types: firstly, those who spend their life doing plenty of good deeds, and those are the successful. Secondly, those who combined good deeds with bad deeds, and fell short and those are the losers. And finally, the people of sins and long heedlessness, and those are the ruined.⁸ Having said that, a young

⁷ He, may Allāh have mercy on him, might be referring to the kinds of people who have no concern other than fulfilling their desire by marrying a lot of women which leads to heedlessness and forgetting the matters of religion. However if the intention behind marriage is chastity and increasing the Muslim ummah, then this is something that *Shari'ah* (Islamic legislation) encouraged. Therefore it cannot be generally said that polygamy is harmful, because Islām legislated it for an exalted wisdom and for personal, moral and social necessities.

⁸ This *athar* was also mentioned with similar meaning in *Hilyatu'l-Auliya'* (3/131) from 'Ubayd Allāh Ibn-Shamīṭ he said, "My father used to say, 'People are of three types: a man who started doing good deeds from a very young age =

man should reflect on which category he falls under, for his position, of youthfulness, is unique. Therefore he should appreciate the value of what he can do in this time and also the great reward as a result.

For that reason, one should hold fast to patience! Because he who seeks eternal pleasure in the Hereafter will be able to endure even being unmarried despite of his youthfulness and lust, and as a result he will be praised for his patience and so he will be told "This is your day!"⁹. And he who sinned during his youthfulness should reflect on the great satisfaction and achievement he has missed out on. For nothing remains from sins except lasting regret, which he feels distressed by every time he remembers it. And so remembering it becomes a punishment. Thus, whenever someone tears off the garment of piety, only a fool will buy it off him as it becomes nothing but a deficient merchandise.

Al-Junayd¹⁰, may Allāh have mercy on him, said, "If a man wor-

= and persisted on that until he left this life, this is a *Muqarrab* (one of those brought near to Allāh). And a man who started his life with sins and long heedlessness, but then he repented, then he is *Sāhib al-Yamīn* (companions of the right hand) and finally a man who started doing evil deeds in a very early age and persisted on them until he left this life and this is *Sāhib al-Shimāl* (Companions of the left hand)."

⁹ He is referring to the *ayah* about the believers, "The greatest terror (on the Day of Resurrection) will not grieve them, and the angels will meet them (with the greeting): 'This is your Day which you were promised.'" (*Anbiyā* 21: 103)

¹⁰ Al-Junayd Ibn Muḥammad Ibn ul-Junayd al-Baghdādī al-Khazzāz. His Kunyah is Abūl-Qāsim. He was a legal Jurist, who was knowledgeable in the religion. He was born, raised and died in Baghdād. He was the first to speak about the science of *Tawḥīd* (monotheism) in Baghdād and scholars consider him as the shaykh of asceticism, because he based his teachings on Qur'ān and Sunnah. He died in the year 297 H. (*al-A'lām* 3/141)

ships Allāh for one thousand years, and then he turns away from him for one moment, then what he missed in this moment is more than what he gained [in the one thousand years of worship].”¹¹

One of the righteous predecessors, May Allāh bestow mercy on him, said, “I wish that my both hands were cut, in return the sins of my youth were forgiven.”¹²

[The author, May Allāh bestows His mercy on him, said,] “One day I said in a sermon: ‘O youth! You are like a person travelling in the desert while possessing priceless jewels that he intends to sell in the land of reward, so beware of falling into the trap of your treacherous desire so you do not end up selling what you have for less than of what it is worth. Otherwise, when you reach your destination and see those who made great profits, you will cry for your loss and say, ‘Oh how great is my regret over what I neglected in regard to Allāh’.” However, regret shall never restore what has been missed.

From the lines of poetry expressing such meaning that I have composed are the following:

“Youthfulness dispirits the guided,
and misguides, the rebellious and ignorant ones.
Abandoning sins when one is old and his hair is grey,
is not like the one who abandon sins when he is young.
Rejoice if you struggled against your desires patiently,
O friend, yell at idle play and tell its fire to be extinguished.

¹¹ This *athar* was mentioned in *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'* by Abū-Nu'aym (10/278).

¹² Abū-Nu'aym mentioned this *athar* in *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'* (8/304), and he attributed it to Abū Bakr Ibn 'Ayyāsh.

AWAKING FROM THE SLEEP OF HEEDLESSNESS

Win the praise that Yūsuf received for his patience,
and beware of the hastiness of Adam,
when he was involved in what was corrupted.

So restrain your lust with patience and ensure
you fast continuously, for it will cool you down.
And keep your eyes off unlawfulness and be content
with the lawful you have been blessed with and you will
deserve the praise in the future.

Abandon playfulness for Allāh commends those who are patient,
O soul, this is the season so take your provision from it.
Enduring self desires patiently, is repentance,
so hold fast and oppose your unsettled lust.
You will be praised in the Hereafter if you abandoned your desires,
and you will enjoy the eternal life comfortably.
Verily earning loftiness, lies in the road ahead.”

THE THIRD STAGE

The Stage of Maturity

The Characteristics of this Stage

IN THIS STAGE THERE ARE remnants of youthfulness, and in it the self still inclines towards desires. Nevertheless, during this stage of life a person is more able to struggle against his desires, in spite of the layers of grey hair [i.e. elderliness] that persist to disturb and distant one from the cradle of playfulness. For this reason, the illumination of grey hair, which signals to the path of departure from this life, should be enough warning and alert for a mature man. That said, a mature man should control the remnants of himself, that are still attached and attracted toward his desires, so that he is successful. However this success is neither comparable, nor equivalent to the success achieved at young age.

Imām al-Shāfi'ī, may Allāh have mercy on him, said about someone who had intercourse with his wife while she is menstruating, that if this intercourse took place in the beginning of her menses, he should pay one Dinar; and if it is towards the end of her men-

ses, then he should pay half a Dinar. This ruling was deduced on the basis that the beginning of the wife's menses indicate that there was not much time passed before the man had his previous lawful intercourse with his wife [i.e. his lust should be tamed by then and hence he is more capable of controlling himself] therefore he cannot be excused for what he did. On the other hand, knowing that the woman's menses was almost finished indicated that the man's previous lawful intercourse with his wife was some time ago [i.e. therefore his energy and lust was active again].¹ Thus, he was excused and the penalty was half of what is ordained in the first case.

[From amongst the lines of poetry that Ibn al-Jawzī, may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him, have said pertaining to this meaning:]

“I noticed grey hair to be a dispersed light,
Enlightening the road so it guides.
The light of youthfulness was a trust I kept,
With me until I gave it back to its owner.”

He (may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him) said:

“I lived while shade of youthfulness extending, and,

¹ Al-Shawkānī reported this opinion from al-Shāfi'ī in *Nayl al-Awtār* (1/417) (The print of Maktabat al-Qahirah) and he attributed it to al-Shāfi'ī's old ideology and it is pertaining to a ḥadīth reported by at-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (11/402) ḥadīth number (35:12) from Ibn-'Abbās from the Prophet (ﷺ), that a man had intercourse with his while she was menstruating, he said, “If it is pure blood then he should give in charity one Dinar, and if it is a yellow fluid then half a Dinar.”

There are other narrations of this ḥadīth and narrations pertaining to the words al-Shāfi'ī narrated by Aḥmad (1/245), Abū Dāwūd (264), al-Tirmidhī (136), an-Nasā'ī (289) chapter 182, Ibn Mājah (640) and al-Ḥākim (1/171)

The Third Stage: The Stage of Maturity

The spring shakes and youthfulness is on its peak.

Then the grey hair arrived with its soldiers,
like lions from the jungle that made my black hair disappear.

I was in the dark then the dawn of grey hair shined,
and it immediately dismissed the dark night [i.e. black hair].
The blooming spring that was strong became weak and dry,
and bended after it was standing straight.

Death shall arrive so expect it,
for life is short and the journey is counted.
Disturbance must take place in life suddenly,
for the phase of mortality is impossible.
Hearing has become disabled and no longer can hear sermons,
and ignorance has spread while the heart is as hard as a rock."

He (may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him) also said:

"Would what has gone return to me ever,
or would I ever see its stars sparking from distance.

Whenever I recall my life that has passed,
I revive and awake in a disturbing sorrow.
Invest what has remained and make up for what has gone,
as there might be a benefit in what has remained.
The time of youthfulness was amazingly playful,
for it was near when I recall myself weaned.

Woe to me for what has gone,
and for the days that I have wasted foolishly."

THE FOURTH STAGE

The Stage of Old age [The Good End]

IN THE BEGINNING OF OLD AGE there might be remnants of desires, therefore an old man is rewarded according to his level of patience. However the more one gets old, the weaker his desire gets, and so a sin is not usually sought.

A poet said,

“When the sin was far from you, you have abandoned it,
while the lust is still alive in the heart.

So all praise is to Allāh for leaving it,
for it is not you who should be praised.”

Therefore if an old man commits a sin on purpose, he is worse off, because his desire has already extinguished. This is why the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “The the most detested type of a person to Allāh, Exalted is He, is an old person who commits

adultery.”¹ Furthermore, there are some old people who degrade themselves on purpose so they wear gold rings [i.e. wearing gold is not only prohibited in Islām, but also considered degrading to men as it entails inappropriate playfulness].²

So woe to him whose old age and grey hair did not ward him off what would degrade him, for this is nothing other than a defect in his *Īmān*. Further to the point, a knowledgeable old man might say, “my knowledge should defend and protect me [from harm]” but he seems to forget that his knowledge is evidence against him.

Reports and Statements of the Righteous

One of our Shaykhs was seen in a dream. In the dream he was asked, “What did Allāh do to you?” He answered, “He forgave me while He was turning away from me.” It was said to him, “He forgave you but still was turning away from you?!” He said, “Yes, and He did the same with a group of scholars who did not work in accordance with their knowledge.” I also saw in my dream one

¹ Reported by an-Nasā’i (1:86) ḥadīth number (2576) and Ibn Hibbān (1098-*Mawarid*) from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah under the text: “The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘There are four whom Allāh, may he be exalted and glorified, hates: A seller who swears [by the name of Allāh] a lot, a boastful poor man, an old man who commits adultery, and an unjust ruler.’” Al-Albānī said, “This is a *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) chain of narration on the condition of Muslim.” (See: *As-Silsilah as-Ṣaḥīḥah* 1/637, ḥadīth number 363)

² Know, my Muslim brother, that wearing a gold ring is prohibited for men and the proof is the ḥadīth which was reported by al-Bukharī (10/315 - *al-Fath*) ḥadīth number 5864, Muslim (3/1654 - ‘Abdu’l-Bāqī) ḥadīth number 2089: Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited [wearing] a gold ring.” For more details see: *Adāb al-Zīfāf* by Al-Albānī pp.123.

of my Shaykhs who used to be negligent [his Islamic duties] during his life, standing naked while three dogs were hanging from his breasts. One of them was a puppy, and it was sucking his breasts.

Yahya Ibn Aktham³ was seen in a dream and was asked, "What did Allāh do to you?" Yahya replied, "He, Exalted is He, said to me, 'O evil old man, if it was not for your grey hair, I would have burnt you in the hellfire.'" ⁴

Al-Fuḍhayl⁵, may Allāh bestow His Mercy on him, said, "Seventy sins are forgiven for an ignorant man, before one sin is forgiven for a scholar.⁶ Allāh, Exalted and Glorified is He, said, "Is he who knows like he who does not know?"⁷

³ Yahya Ibn Aktham Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qutn at-Tamīmī al-Asīdī al-Maruzī. His kunyah is Abū Muḥammad. A respectable famous judge from the noblest jurisprudents. He was born in 159 H. He was close to al-Ma'mūn and was the head of judges in his time and then al-Ma'mūn appointed him to manage his kingdom. He wrote books in *Fiqh* and *Usūl* (Fundamentals). He died in 242 H. (*al-A'lām* 8/138)

⁴ For the complete text of this *athar* please see *Ṣayd al-Khaṭīr*.

⁵ Al-Fuḍayl Ibn 'Iyāḍh Ibn-Mas'ūd at-Tamīmī al-Yarbū'ī. His kunyah: is Abū-'Alī. He was the Imām of Makkah and one of the righteous worshippers. He was trustworthy and precise, noble, having *wara'* and narrated many ḥadīths. Many people studied under him among which is Imām al-Shāfi'ī. He was born in Samarqand in 105 H and grew up in Abiward and then he moved to Kufah, where he is originally from. He traveled to Makkah in the year 187 H and died there in the same year. (*al-A'lām* 5/153)

⁶ This *athar* was mentioned in *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'* by Abū-Nu'aym (8/110) and (7/286).

⁷ This is not an *ayah* rather it might be an *athar*.

The Fourth Stage: The Stage of Old age [The Good End]

Abū'l-Darda⁸ may Allāh be pleased with him said, "Woe one time, to he who does not know and acts!⁹ And Woe seven times to he who knows and does not act upon his knowledge!¹⁰ Thus, if you claim not knowing then now you do know; and if you admit knowing, then there is no *ayah* that commands or prohibits except that you should abide by it.

I have composed some lines of poetry regarding old age, some of these lines are:

"We were befooled with fake youthfulness,
then suddenly woke up aged in a surprise.
The grey hair enlightened for us a guiding path,
and then we regretted our previous flaws.
I regret a life that its pleasures faded away,
and kept for us nothing but shame and disgrace.
Thus, we weep on what we have done today,
for we have done so many wrongs.
We have nothing left but fear and sadness,
and regret with humiliation and degradation.

⁸ Abū'l-Darda': 'Uwaymir Ibn Mālik Ibn-Qays Ibn Umayyah al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī. There is a difference of opinion concerning his name. He accepted Islām on the day of *Badr* and witnessed *Uhud*. He was from the Legal Jurists and ascetics of the Companions. Before the mission of the Prophet (ﷺ), he was a merchant in Madīnah and then he devoted himself to worship. When Islām was revealed, he became famous for his courage, worship and he was one of those who memorised the Qur'ān in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). He died in Sham in the year of 32 H. (*al-A'lām*, 5/98)

⁹ So it is in the original text and it was mentioned in *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'* as: "If Allāh wants, He will teach him."

¹⁰ Abū-Nu'aym mentioned this *athar* in *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'* (1/211)

Some people entered the house of al-Junayd, may Allāh bestow His Mercy on him, when he was dying and they found him bowing and prostrating [i.e. praying]. Despite of his weakness and knowing the moment of his death was very soon, he wanted to fold his legs [i.e. while in prayer to do the Sunnah], but he could not because his legs were paralyzed. One man said, "Why is he doing all this?" Another replied, "This from the graces of Allāh! Allāh is the Most Great!"³

‘Āmir ibn Qays⁴ used to pray one thousand *rak‘āt* everyday.⁵ One day a man met him and told him, "Can I have a word with you?" so ‘Amir said, "Then stop the time, so I can talk with you!" And he told a man who asked him a question, "be quick for I am about to leave". The man asked him, "What do you mean by that? He said, "My soul will soon leave my body!"

died in Baghdād. And he was the first to talk about *Tamhīd* and the spiritual stages. He was the Imām of the Baghdādis (people of Baghdād) and their Shaykh in his time. And he is the uncle of al-Junayd and his teacher. He died in 253 H. (*al-A‘lām*, 3/82)

³ This *athar* was mentioned in *Tabaqāt Auliya’* pp.133,134.

⁴ ‘Āmir Ibn Abūl-Qays is ‘Āmir Ibn-‘Abdullāh. He is known as Ibn ‘Abd-Qays al-‘Anbari. A *Tābi‘ī* (one who has met a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ)) from the tribe of ‘Anbar. Abū-Nu‘aym said, "...he is one of the worshipper in Bastrah to which he emigrated. He learnt Qur’ān from Abū Musā al-Ash‘arī, and took worship from him and he was one of the people who lived at the same era of Uways al-Qarnī and he died in *Bayt al-Maqdis* in the Caliphate of Mu‘āwiyah in 55 H. (*al-A‘lām*, 3/253)

⁵ Abū-Nu‘aym mentioned this *athar* in *Ḥīyatun-nabiyya* (2/89)

'Uthmān al-Bākilānī⁶ said, "The time that I hate the most is when I break my fast, because working [i.e. preparing something to eat] busies me from being in the state of *dhikr* (Allāh's remembrance)."

Dāwūd at-Ta'ī⁷, may Allāh bestow His Mercy on him, used to the Fatīṭ [i.e. a mixture of water and pieces of bread] only and not eat the bread in it. When he was asked about that, he said, "Between eating bread and drinking its soup a time that is enough for the reciting of fifty ayahs (verses of the Qur'ān)."⁸

Some people visited a worshipper and told him, "Did we interrupt you?" He said, "Yes, you did! I was reading [Qur'ān] and you prevented me [from continuing]."

Indeed whoever knows the nobility of life will take advantage of it. In the Ṣaḥīḥ books, it was stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said "Whoever says '*Subḥān Allāh wa bi ḥamdī*', a palm tree is planted for him in paradise."⁹

⁶ 'Uthmān al-Bākilānī: He is 'Uthman Ibn-'Isā Abū 'Amr al-Baqlawī. One of the ascetic worshippers. He lived in the local *maṣjid* [where *Jumu'ah* was not prayed] and he did not leave it except for the *Jumu'ah Ṣalāh*. (*Sifat aṣ-Ṣafwāh* (2/483-484))

⁷ Dāwūd Ibn-Naṣīr at-Ta'ī: His kunyah is Abū-Sulaymān. He lived at the time of al-Mahdī al-'Abāsī. He is originally from Khurāsān, he was born in Kufah and left for Baghdād. He learnt from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, he returned to Kufah and he kept to himself and stuck to worship until he died in 165 H. (*al-A'lām*, 2/335)

⁸ Al-Khātib mentioned this *athar* in *Tārīkh Baghdād*. (8:353)

⁹ An authentic ḥadīth: Reported by at-Tirmidhī (5/477) ḥadīth number (3464-3465), Ibn Ḥibbān (2/97-*Iḥṣān*) ḥadīth number (832) and al-Ḥākim in *al-*

Al-Ḥasan¹⁰ said, "The land of Paradise is flat and angels keep planting in it. When they slacken, they are asked "Why did you slacken?" They [the angels] say, "Our fellow has slackened."¹¹ So al-Ḥasan said: Do not make angels feel slackened, may Allāh bestow His Mercy on all of you.

I have seen old people who find comfort in people's visits, enjoy hearing people's talks which cause nothing but harms and never bring any benefit and so their time passes in vain. But there is no doubt that if they understood the preciousness of time and their life they would have realised that a *tasbīḥah* [i.e. saying 'Subḥān Allāh'] is better than all that. This state only occurs because of people's heedlessness of the hereafter because one is rewarded for one *tasbīḥah* -as have been mentioned - and obviously worldly talks bring harm and do not benefit for their hereafter.

Abū-Musā al-Ash'arī¹², may Allāh be pleased with him, used to

=
Mustadrak (1/501)

Al-Albānī reported it in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* (2/1097) ḥadīth number (6429) and in *as-Silsilah as-Ṣaḥīḥah* (64).

¹⁰ He is referring to al-Ḥasan Ibn Abū'l Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. His kunyah is Abū-Sa'īd, his father was from Bayan. He was captured and became the slave of Anṣār. He was born during the caliphate of 'Umar... His mother was the servant of Umm-Salamah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). He was a contemporary of many of the companions, thus he narrated some ḥadīth from them as *Mursal ḥadīth*. He died in the year 110 H. (*Sifat as-Ṣaḥāb* 3/233-237)

¹¹ Abū-Nu'aym attributed this *athar* in *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'* (9/276) to Abū-Sulaymān ad-Dārānī.

¹² Abū-Musā al-Ash'arī is 'Abdullāh Ibn-Qays Ibn Salīm Ibn-Haḍār Ibn Ḥarb

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The Fifth Stage: The State of Decrepitude

fast in hot weather so it was said to him, "You are an old man." He said, "I'm preparing it for a long day [i.e. Day of Judgement]."

A worshipper was once asked: "You should be easy on yourself [i.e. do not exhaust yourself with acts of worship]. He replied: "Indeed, I exhaust myself in worship because easiness is what I am looking for."

A friend of Sarī al-Saqatī, may Allāh bestow His Mercy on him, went to visit him, so he found a group of people in his house. Thus he said, "O Sarī! You [i.e. your house] have become an environment for idlers!" And he left immediately.¹³

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Abū-Musā from the tribe of al-Ash'ar from Qahtān: He had a beautiful recitation and was one of the scholars amongst the Companions. He was born in Zabīd in Yemen and he went to Makkah after the revelation of Islām, he became Muslim and emigrated to Habashah. He died in the year 42H or 44H. (*al-A'lām*, 4/114)

¹³ Abū-Nu'aym mentioned this *athar* in *Hilyatu'l-Auliya'* (10/119)

Closure

WHOEVER KNOWS THE NOBILITY and privilege of life and its value will not waste a second of it. Thus the young should guard his merchandise [i.e. life], the aged should restrain himself as much as he can, the old should supply himself [with good deeds as he is soon expected] to join his people [i.e. those who have passed away before him], and the decrepit should be cautious for his soul might be taken away from him in any minute.

I ask Allāh to benefit us with our knowledge and may He not take away the benefits of our understanding for indeed He is the Most Able to do it.

And may the peace and blessing of Allāh be upon
our master Muḥammad, his family and
his companions.

Appendices

Taken from the writings of
Imām Abū'l-Faraj 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Jawzī
may Allāh have mercy upon him

APPENDIX ONE

Averting Indolence

LOVING LEISURE, PREFERRING idleness and the perceived difficulty of tasks are what lead one to laziness. Bukhārī and Muslim reported from Anas ibn Mālik (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to frequently say,

« اللهم إني أعوذ بك من الهم والحزن والعجز والكسل »

“I seek refuge in Allāh from grief and distress, old age and laziness.”¹

Muslim reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “A strong believer is better and more loved by Allāh than a weak believer.”²

At all times, strive for that which will benefit you, seek the help of Allāh, and do not be helpless. If anything (bad) befalls you, do not say, ‘If only I had done such-and-such, then such-and-such

¹ Reported by Bukhārī 8/98, Muslim p.2079, 2080 and 2088 (Abdul-Baqī)

² Reported by Muslim, *al-Qadar* 34.

would have happened.' Rather you should say, 'Allāh preordained this, and whatever He wills He does,' for the words 'if only' open the door to Satan.

Ibn Mas'ūd (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, "I detest a man whom I see idle from striving for this world and the hereafter."³ He also said, "At the end of time there will be people whose best actions will be blaming each other, also known as the lazy ones."

Ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, "Slackening married laziness and they gave birth to poverty."

Mālik ibn Dinār said, "There is no righteous deed except that there is an obstacle that comes before it, if a person endures it patiently he will reach comfort, and if he fears it he will abstain from it."

Sufyān al-Thawrī said, "People left riding fast horses, and we have stayed on indolent camels."

Section One: The Cure for Laziness

The cure for laziness lies in motivating and urging the endeavor by fearing that one may miss the goal, or be blamed, or fall into regret [lest one does not make an effort]. For the regret of a negligent person when he sees the reward of a hard worker is the greatest punishment. Also a person of sound mind should reflect on the negative consequence of indolence, for many a time has leisure lead to regret.

³ Reported by Abū Nu'aym in *al-Hilyah* 1/130, through the chain of Yahya Ibn Wathāb from Ibn Mas'ūd, may Allāh be pleased with him.

Whoever sees that his neighbour has travelled, returning with profits, his regret will be many times greater than the satisfaction of leisure, similarly if one person becomes brilliant in knowledge and another does not due to his laziness. The intended purpose of these examples is to explain that the pain of missing something exceeds the satisfaction of laziness.

Wise people are unanimous that wisdom is not reached by relaxation and idleness. Therefore, whoever knows the fruits of laziness will avoid it, and whoever is aware of the fruits of hard work will endure the hardships of the path. Moreover an intellectual knows that he was not created in vain, rather he, in this world, is like a hired laborer or a merchant.

The span of lifetime in this world, which is practically the life one is given to perform good deeds, and the span of time one is to spend in the grave is like a single moment compared to the eternal dwelling in paradise or in the hellfire.

From amongst the best cures for indolence is reading and reflecting on the biographies of those who strove. Therefore, I wonder at he who would prefer idleness in the sowing season and leaves yielding for the harvesting season.

It was narrated that Farqad said, "You put on the garment of leisure before you started working. Have you not noticed that when a worker starts working he wears his cheapest garment, when he is done, he takes a shower and puts on two clean garments. On the other hand you wore the garment of leisure, before you even started working."⁴

⁴ *Ḥilyah al-Awliyā'* 3/47 through the chain of Ibn Shawthab from Farqad al-Subkhī.

APPENDIX TWO

Self Discipline

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE is that mankind's nature, disposition is sound and healthy. Whereas disease and defects are extraneous, every child is born upon the *fitrah* (natural disposition), which is further explicated in knowing that discipline is ineffective except in an intellectual, thus it does not benefit a mule, or a wild animal that is looked after while young, and will not leave hunting when it matures. And you know of the famous story, 'who informed you that your father was a wolf?'

Know that within every human being there exists three capacities: A lingual capacity, a lustful capacity, and an anger capacity. That said, he who Allāh honored by bestowing upon him the love of knowledge should care for perfecting his 'lingual self', by which Allāh favored him over all animals, and with which he shared a common characteristic with angels. He should make this self capacity predominant over the other two capacities. So that it becomes like the rider, his body becomes like the horse, because a rider should be predominant over a horse due to his elevation, so he be able to lead it wherever he likes and he should be able to

slaughter it if he so wishes. Likewise the lingual capacity should be predominant over the other two capacities, using and ceasing to use them as it likes and whoever is like that truly deserves to be called a human being.

Plato said: "A true human is he whose 'lingual self' is stronger than the rest of his other types of selves, because if lustfulness is excessive, a person becomes an animal. If a person releases his *Hawā*, lives an unrestrictive life, then he becomes displaced from his centre, hence he will become worse than an animal, because that is actually the nature of animals, but, in his case, he has contradicted his [humanly] nature. And when the anger capacity is excessive, humans' traits become as that of wild and beastly animals. Hence, one should tame his inner self by opposing lustfulness, controlling anger and following the lingual capacity, so as he may become like the angels and avoid worshipping lust and anger."

Section One: How to Discipline Oneself

Know that discipline of the self is achieved through lenience and moving from one state to another. This should not be done violently but rather leniently, and then he should combine both hope and fear. He strengthens this discipline by keeping good company, leaving bad company, studying the Qur'ān, beneficial stories, thinking about paradise, hell and reading the biographies of wise people and ascetics.

Some of the righteous predecessors would desire a sweet treat, and so they would promise themselves to eat it. If they prayed the night prayer they would allow themselves this reward.

Sufyān al-Thawrī used to eat whatever he desired and then when

he woke up in the morning he would say: "The black man has fed his child!" Scholars and exegetes have always been and continue to be lenient to the self until they have owned and subjugated it.

A neighbour of Mālik ibn Dinār said, "One night I heard him saying to himself, 'That's how you should be!' The next morning I told him, 'There was no one home with you, so who did you say that to?' He said, 'Myself asked me for some bread, it insisted so I restrained it from eating for three days, then I found a dry piece of bread, when I was about to eat it I said, 'Wait I will get soft bread' so it [his self] said, 'I am contented with this.' So I said, 'That's how you should be!'"

Know that if the self knows that you are serious it will also be serious and hardworking, if it knows that you are indolent it will become your master.

A poet said:

A horse rider knows the characteristics of his horse,
so he exhausts it repeatedly, by making it sense fear.

From among the practices of discipline of the self is bringing it to account for every statement, for every action, for every negligence and sin. When its discipline is over, it will appreciate the exhaustion it endured.

Thābit al-Banānī said, "I endured the night for twenty years [by praying] and [then] I delighted in the night for twenty years."

Abū Yazīd said, "I kept driving myself to my Lord while it cried, until I drove it while it smiled."

A poet said:

I still laugh and weep every time I look,
until its eye is tainted with my blood

Nevertheless one should not forget the rights of the self, which is giving it, its gratifications that do not oppose the object of discipline. For if it is prevented from its aims in general, the heart will become blind, worries will disperse, and the slave will become constrained. And know that the estimation of the self with Allāh, May He be exalted, is greater than the estimation of the acts of worship. This is why He has permitted the breaking of the fast for a traveler; however it is only the people of knowledge who understand this.

APPENDIX THREE

Disciplining Children

THE BEST OF DISCIPLINE IS that which is done at a young age. On the other hand, if a boy is left to his own characteristics and matured possessing these characteristics, then changing him would be difficult.

A poet said:

If you straighten the branches they will straighten up,
but wood does not soften if you amend it.

Discipline benefits children gradually,
but it will not benefit those who have aged.

Perseverance in discipline is a significant principle, particularly in regard to children as it benefits them in that good becomes a habit to them.

A poet said:

Do not neglect disciplining a child,
even if he complains of the pain of exhaustion.

Know that a doctor considers the age of the patient, his place, time and then he prescribes the medicine. Likewise discipline should be suited to each child, and the signs of the success or failure of a child can be noticed from a very early age; a clever child is stimulated by learning and the unintelligent is not availed by learning similar to the way a camel tamer does not become intelligent by practicing sport.

A man once told Sufyān al-Thawrī, "We hit our children if they do not pray." Sufyān told him, "You should rather [encourage them and] give them glad tidings."

Zubayd al-Yāfi used to tell the boys, "Whoever prays will have five walnuts."

Ibrāhīm ibn Adham said, "O Son! Seek the knowledge of ḥadīth. I will give you one Dirham for every ḥadīth that you hear." So on account of this he started to seek the knowledge of ḥadīth.

Section One: Taking Care of the Trust

A father should know that his child is a trust placed in his hands, so he should make him avoid bad company from a young age. He should teach him the good, for a child's heart is empty and accepts anything that is given to it. He also should make him love shyness and generosity. He should make him wear white clothes. Thus, if he asks to wear colored clothes then he should tell him that these are the clothes of girls and effeminate. He should tell him the stories of the righteous, make him avoid love poetry, because it is a seed of corruption, he should not prevent him from reading poems about generosity or courageousness, so that he exalts these characteristics and becomes courageous.

Appendix Three: Disciplining Children

If he makes a mistake he should overlook it. His teacher should expose his secrets and mistakes, he should not reprehend him except in private. He should prohibit excessive eating, excessive sleeping, make him accustomed to simple food, minimal sleep for it is healthier. He should be treated with physical exercises such as walking, disciplined by being prohibited from turning his back to people and from sneezing and yawning in their presence. If he chooses to exhibit a bad characteristic, he should be deterred from it excessively before it becomes a habit, and it is fine to discipline him if lenience is of no use. Luqman told his son, "O Son! Disciplining the son acts as a fertiliser for sowing seeds."

If the boy is aggressive, his father should be lenient with him. Ibn 'Abbās said, "The aggressiveness of a boy is an increase in his intelligence."

Section Two: Future of your Child

Wise people used to say, "Your son is like your flower the first seven years, and your servant the second seven years. By the time he reaches fourteen, if you have been good to him then he will be your partner, and if you were bad to him then he will be your enemy." A child should not be beaten or offended after he reaches puberty, because then he will hope to lose his father in order that he may have his own way. Whoever reaches twenty years of age and has not become righteous, then his godliness is remote, however leniency should be practiced with everyone.

APPENDIX FOUR

Awakening After Heedlessness

MY SON, DO NOT LET YOUR PAST carelessness make you lose hope of achieving good, for many people have come back to wakefulness after long sleep. Shaikh Abū Ḥākim¹, may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him, told me what follows: 'When I was a child, I spent my time in idle play and did not pay attention to Sacred Knowledge. Then my father Abū 'Abdullāh, Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him, wanted to talk to me and said: 'My son, I will not be here for you forever, so take twenty dinārs, open a bread shop and make some money.' I said: 'What are you saying?' So he said: 'Open a cloth shop then.'

¹ The great exemplary scholar Abū Ḥākim Ibrāhīm ibn Dinār al-Nahruwānī al-Ḥanbalī, one of the Imams of Baghdad, a godly ascetic, who was benevolent and forbearing. He was one of the greatest scholars in the field of inheritance. He established a school by Bab al-Azaj and in which he remained, worshipping Allāh. He preferred to be unknown, and was always content with his condition. He used to earn his bread as a tailor, taking only two coins for a garment. Some individuals attempted to anger him but to no avail, and he would serve the disabled and elderly with a joyful face. His hearing of ḥadīth was correct. He passed away in 556. (al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī: *Siyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā*, 20/396. For his biography, refer to: Ibn al-Jawzī: *al-Muntazam*, 10/201, 202, *Tha'il Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/231-241, *Shatharāt al-Thabab*, 4/176, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 12/245)

Appendix Four: Awakening After Heedlessness

I said: 'How can you say this to me when I'm the son of the judge of judges 'Abdullāh al-Dāmaghānī?' He replied: 'But I do not see you seeking knowledge.' I said: 'Give me a lecture right now.' He did so and I came forward to busy myself with knowledge. From thereon, I began taking the studying of Sacred Knowledge seriously so Allāh gave me success in that."

A colleague of Abū Muḥammad al-Halāwānī,³ may Allāh bestow His Mercy upon him, told me the following: 'My father died when I was twenty one and at that time I was known for being idle. When I went to claim a house I had inherited from its inhabitants, I heard them say: the Mudbir, i.e. *al-Rabīṭ* [he who abandoned the adornment of life] has arrived.' Having heard this, I said to myself: 'Is this what they say about me?' I went to my

² The profound scholar, the mufti of 'Iraq, the judge of judges, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Hasan ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Husawayhi al-Dāmaghānī al-Hanāfī (Dāmaghānī refers to somebody from Dāmaghān which is a big city between al-Rayy and Naisabur). Al-Dhahabi said: "He was a person of nobility and great decency and has been compared to judge Abū Yusuf in his times. Among his children were Imams and judges." He died in 478 and his son, the judge of judges Abū al-Hasan led his funeral prayer. For his biography, refer to: *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 3/109, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 12/129, *Shatharāt al-Thabab*, 3/362, *al-Fawa'id al-Bahīyyah*, 182-183, *al-Kāmil*, 10/146, *Sīyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā*, 18/485, *al-Tbar*, 3/292.

³ The jurist 'Abdu'l-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Halāwānī, he was a Legal Jurist and Imam. Al-Munthiri said: "He was a Hanbali scholar and was versed in jurisprudence, Qur'ānic exegesis and ḥadīth." Ibn Rajab said: "I saw something that was written in his handwriting which indicates that he has authored a major commentary on the differed upon issues. He has also written a forty one volume commentary on the Qur'ān which he has talked about." For his biography, refer to: Ibn Rajab: *Thaib Tabaqāt al-F-Ianabila*, 1/221.

mother and told her: You will find me in the *masjid* of Shaikh Abū al-Khaṭṭāb⁴ if you need me.' I accompanied him and did not leave except for delivering judgments. I then became a judge for a period of time." I say: "I saw him delivering legal verdicts and debating."

⁴ The Shaikh, Imām and great God fearing scholar of the Ḥanbalites, Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Maḥfūz ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ibn Ḥasan al-ʿIrāqī al-Kalwadhānī at first, then al-Baghdādī later on (d. 510 AH). Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī said: 'Abū al-Khaṭṭāb was a fine scholar. He was benevolent, truthful, well mannered and spoke extraordinarily eloquent arabic. He was a smart man who narrated many ḥadīths and studied and recorded ḥadīth as well." Ibn Rajab said (*al-Thail*, 1/120): 'Abū al-Khaṭṭāb was a great jurist who used to focus much on verification of matters. He has checked and investigated numerous matters of jurisprudence and legal theory and differs with the majority view of the Hanbalites in some issues." After this he went on to mention many examples of that. For his biography, refer to: *Siyar al-Aʿlām al-Nubulā*, 19/348, Ibn al-Jawzī: *al-Muntaẓam*, 9/190-193, *al-Kāmil*, 10/524, *al-Ibar*, 4/21, *Mirʾāt al-Zamān*, 8/41-42, *al-Bidāyah waʾl-Nihāyah*, 12/180, *Tbaīl Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabīla*, 1/116-127, *Sbatharāt al-Thabab*, 4/27-28.

APPENDIX FIVE

The Lives of Our Pious Predecessors

YOU SHOULD AIM TO BE PERFECT and as motivated as man can be, as many people are restricting themselves either to isolation from worldly matters or studying Sacred Knowledge, and only very few combine complete knowledge with complete action. I have acquainted myself with the lives of the Tabi'un and those after them and found the most complete of them to be four: Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib,¹ al-Hasan al-Basri, Sufyan al-Thauri and Ahmad ibn Hanbal² may Allāh be

¹ Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib Abū Muḥammad al-Qurashī al-Makhzūmī: The great Imam and scholar of Madīnah and the best of the Tabi'in in his time (d. 73). Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī said (*al-Siyar*, 4/219): 'He had outstanding knowledge and application of it.' For his biography, refer to: *Ḥiyyatu'l-Auliya'*, (2/161), *Siyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā'*, (4/217, 246), *Tathkirat al-Huffāẓ*, 1/51, Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt* (5/119). Ibn al-Jawzī has dedicated a two volume book for his life and virtues as mentioned in *Siyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā'*, (21/369), and *al-Thail*, (1/418).

² Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal: The Rabbānī Imām, al-Siddiqi The Second, the firm bearer of tribulations. He was put to test in the days of Caliph al-Ma'mun concerning the calamity of Qur'ān's creation. He stood firm and did not answer the way he was told to, and by this earned a high position in this world and the Hereafter. Ibn al-Jawzī has dedicated a volume to his life and virtues, so refer to it.

pleased with them. These were only men but they had high ambitions and determination which we are lacking in many people today. Many of our predecessors were highly motivated, and if you wish to learn about them just read through *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwa*.³ You can ponder over the lives of Sa'īd, al-Ḥasan, Sufyān and Aḥmad⁴ if you wish as I have dedicated a whole book for each one of them.

³ This book has been printed: First volume: *Matba'a al-Asil* of Ḥalab (1389 ah), second volume: *Matba'a al-Nabḍa al-Jadida* of Egypt (1390 AH), third volume: *Matba'a Wikālat al-Suḥuf* of Egypt (1393 AH), volume four: *Matba'a Dār al-Sba'b* of Egypt (1393 AH).

⁴ In his explanation of Abū al-Dardā's ḥadīth "Who takes a path, seeking knowledge on it" (p. 52, 53), Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab described them as 'The Rabbānī scholars, the scholars of Afterlife.'

APPENDIX SIX

Knowledge and Action are Intertwined

BE CAREFUL OF BUSYING YOURSELF with mere worship with no learning, as many ascetics and Šūfis have gone astray due to acting without knowledge.¹

Cover yourself with the two beautiful garments that will not make you famous among the material folks with their classiness, nor famous among the ascetics with their ruggedness. Take your-

¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (*Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm*, p. 54), al-Khaṭīb (*al-Faqīh wa al-Mutafaqqib*, 1/19) and Ibn Abī Shaibah (*al-Musannaf*, 13/470) related that 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Who acts without knowledge harms more than benefits." Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (p. 215), Ibn Abī Shaibah (13/499) related also that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣṭī said: "Seek knowledge in a way that does not harm your worship, and worship in a way that does not harm your knowledge. Who acts without knowledge harms more than benefits." The great scholar Ibn al-Qayyim said (*Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa'ada*, 1/ 82, 83): "A person who acts without knowledge is like someone who travels without a guide, and it is known that a person like this will more likely be destroyed than saved. In any case, even if we'd suppose that he would survive by agreement, his deed would never be considered as something praiseworthy. All men of intellect agree that the case is quite contrary. Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taimiyyah used to say: "Who abandons the guide strays from the path, and non can be guided with other than that which the Messenger came with."

self to account for every glance, word and step you take as you will be asked about all of it.

Those who hear you speak will benefit from your knowledge according to how much you yourself benefit from it. When a preacher doesn't apply his knowledge his exhortation will flow off the hearts' surface like water flows off a rock.²

So, do not ever preach without an intention and do not walk without an intention. Don't even swallow a bite without an intention.³ All of this will become clear to you once you get acquainted with the characteristics of our predecessors.⁴

² Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī related (*Iqtidā' al-'Ilm al-'Amal*, p. 97) by way of Ja'far from Malik who said: "I read the following from the Torah: 'When a scholar does not act upon his knowledge, his admonishment flows off peoples' hearts like a drop of water flows off a rock'" Ibn al-Jawzī said (*al-Yawāqit al-Jawzīyyah*, p. 95): "Knowledge and action are twins whose mother is high motivation."

³ You can read about intention and its importance: *Jamī' 'Ulum wa al-Hikam*, p. 20-21.

⁴ All the appendices have been taken from the English translation of the following books, '*Disciplining the Soul*', '*Disturber of the Hearts*' and '*Sincere Counsel to the Seekers of Sacred Knowledge*', all published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2011-2012 under the Ibn Jawzī Series.